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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

OMB-01 /062 W
---------- 066385
R 170415Z JUN 75
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 619
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 5484

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN AND INDIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: THE PAKS ARE APPREHENSIVE THAT A WEAKENED INDIRA GANDHI MIGHT TURN TO FOREIGN ADVENTURES TO BOLSTER HER POLITICAL STANDING: BHUTTO HAS NOW SPECIFICCALLY MENTIONED THIS. LITTLE GLEE HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN THE PRESS HERE OVER MRS. GHANDHI'S TROUBLES, IN PART BECAUSE BHUTTO HAS HAD WORD PASSED TO THIS EFFECT, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED THAT A STRONG MRS. GANDHI AT THE HELM WAS PREFERABLE FROM THE PAK VIEWPOINT TO ANY OTHER ARRANGEMENT IN NEW DELHI. A SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL HAS ALSO ATTESTED THAT THE GOP IS NOT HAPPY WITH MRS. GHANDHI'S PREDICAMENTS OR THE PROSPECT OF HER LEAVING OFFICE.
END SUMMARY.

1. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THEME FOUND IN PAKISTAN REACTION TO THE INDIAN POLK ICAL CRISIS HAS BEEN
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APPREHENSION THAT A WEAKENED INDIRA GANDHI MIGHT TURN

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TO FOREIGN ADVENTURE TO BOLSTER HER POLITICAL STANDING.
THIS APPREHENSION, WHICH HAD BEEN MENTIONED TO US AT
MFA SEVERAL TIMES OVER THE PAST MONTHS AS THE GUJARAT
ELECTION AND THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT DECISION APPROACHED,
WAS EXPRESSED IN SEVERAL NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS AND COMMEN-
TARIES OVER THE WEEKEND. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO HAS
ALSO RAISED IT. IN A STATEMENT SHARPLY REACTING TO
MRS. GHANDHI'S ALLEGED REMARK THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
IN INDIA HAVE BROUGHT "THE GREATEST HAPPINESS TO PAKIS-
TAN", THE PRIME MINISTER STATED THAT "WE HAVE TO BE
WATCHFUL LEST MRS.INDIRA GHANDHI, BEDEVILLED AND
BEWILDEREBDBY THE PRESENT CRISIS, SEEKS TO EXTRICATE
HERSELF FROM THIS MESS BY EMBARING ON AN ADVENTUROUS
COURSE AGAINST PAKISTAN".
LIWM GOING BEYOND THE THEME THAT MRS. GHANDI SECURELY
IN OFFICE IS A SAFER PROPOSITION FOR PAKISTAN THAN
THE INDIAN PM BATTTQNG FOR HER POLITICAL LIFE, SEVERAL
COMMENTATORS ALSO EXPRESSED APPREHENSION THAT INDIA
MIGHT BE IN FOR A PERIOD OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY, A
PROSPOECT THEY THOUGHT DANGEROUS FOR THE PAKS. SOME
ALSO MENTIONED THE UNPLEASANT PROPSPECT OF A SUCCESSOR
GOVERNMENT COMING TO POWER IN NEW DELHI WHUUH WOULD
DEPEND ON AVOWEDLY ANTI-PAKISTAN ELEMENTS FOR SUPPORT.
WHILE FEW TEARS, CROCODILE OR OTHERWISE, HAVE BEEN SHED
OVER MRS. GANDHI HERSELF AND AT LEAST ONE MASS-CIRCULA-
TION URDU NEWSPAPER
HAS CALLED FOR HER RESIGNATION
(IN ORDER, INTER ALIA, TO IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR POLITI-
CAL STABILITY), THSNE HAS BEEN LITTLE RMEE EXPRESSED
IN THE PRESS OVER HER DIFFICULTIES. THIS IS IN PART
BHUTTO
  DOING: HE TOLD THE AMBASSADOR JUNE 14 THAT HE
HAD INSTRUCTED SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR INFORMATION YUSUF
BUCH TO PASS THE WORD TO THE PRESS THAT IT WAS NOT TO
GLOAT OVER MRS. GHANDHI'S PREDICAMENT. (HENCE HIS SHARP
REACTION TO HER REPORTED ALLEGATION THAT THE PAKS WERE
HAPPY AT HER DISTRESS). BUT IT PROBABLY ALSO REFLECTS
THE AWARENESS THAT A STRONG MRS. GHANDHI AT THE HELM
WAS PREFERABLE FROM THE PAK VIEWPOINT TO ANY OTHER
ARRANGEMENT IN NEW DELHI.
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3. MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) HAYAT MEHDI HAD
DEVELOPED SEVERAL OF THESE THEMES EARLIER IN A DIS-
CUSSION WITH THE POL COUNSELOR AND A VISITING
NEA/PAB DEPARTMENT OFFICER ON JUNE 13, SOON AFTER THE
GUJARAT RESULTS HAD BECOME KNOWN IN ISLAMABAD. MEHDI
MENTIONED THAT OVER THE YEARS BHUTTO AND MRS. GHANDI
HAD COME TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER: THEY WERE AWARE OF THE

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PRESSURES EACH FACED AND THE MEASURES THE OTHER HAD TO
TAJN TO MEET THEM. HE HELD THAT A NEW INDIAN PM
WOULD NOT BE ABLE AT THE ONSET TO MAKE THE SAMEM
CONCESSIONS MRS. GAN
DHI COULD, AND SUGGESTED THAT THIS
COULD HOLD UP FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION.
HE ALSO NOTED THAT SHOULD CONGRESS NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD
ON TO POWER IN THE ONCOMING INDIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS,
A SUCCESSOR WOULD BE BOTH INHERENTLY UNSTABLE AND
DEPENDENT ON ANTI-PAK ELEMENTS FOR OFFICE.

4. MEHDI, WHO SAID THAT HIS CONCLUSION AT THAT TIME
WAS THAT MRS. GANDHI WOULD NOT LEAVE OFFICE (A FINDING
HE IMPLIED HE HAD PASSED ON UP AT MFA),NHALSO TOOK THE
OCCASION TO STRESS ONCE AGAIN THE DANGER THAT MRS.
GANDHI MIGHT FIND A EDVERSIONARY MOVE AGAINST PAKISTAN
POLITICALLY BENEFICIAL. HE RECALLED, AS HE AND OTHER
SENIOR MFA OFFICIALS HAVE FOR OUR BENEFIT EARLIER,
THE WARNING THAT THE PAK DELEGATION TO THE MAY 15-20
NEW DELHI CIVIL AIR TALKS HAD BEEN GIVEN BY PRIVATE
INDIAN CONTACTS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INDIAN MOVE
AGAINST AZADKASHMIR IN THIS CONTEXT. THE POSSIBILITY
OF AZAD KASHMIR'S BECOMING THE SITE OF AN INDIAN
DIVERSIONARY MOVE WAS ALSO SUGGESTED OBLIQUELY IN AN
EDITORIAL THIS MORNING IN THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED PAKISTAN
TIMES.

5. ASIDE FROM THIS ANALYSIS OF THE POSSIBLE IMPACT
OF THE DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA ON INDO-PAK
RELATIONS, THERE HAS ALSO, OF COURSE, BEEN A GOOD DEAL
OF EDITORIAL COMMENTARY AND HEADLINE COVERAGE DEALING
WITH THE EVENTS THEMSELVES. THESE HAVE EXCITED UNUSUAL
INTEREST. MUCH OF THIS CERTAINLY REFLECTS NATURAL PAK
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INTEREST IN INDIAN EVENTS. BUT SOME MAY STEM FROM
AWARENESS THAT A JUDICIAL RULING HAS BROUGHT ABOUT A
POLITICAL CRISIS, A CONCEPT THAT MAY SEEM PARTICULARLY
RELEVANT TO PAKISTAN, WHOSE SUPREME COURT IS NOW
TAKLING THE ISSUE OF THE GOP DISSOLUTION IN FEBRUARY
OF THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTYM IT IS NOT SURPRISING, IN
THIS CONTEXT, THAT THE INDEPENDENT NAWA-I-WAQT, A FOE
OF AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT, DEVOTED ITS EDITORIAL
COMMENT TO PRAISE OF ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT JUDGE
SINHA.
LUPPI

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